

**I. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method of pretreating a nucleic acid sample obtained from a site comprising the steps of:

- i. ~~pretreating~~ treating the sample prior to analysis to remove or inactivate contaminating nucleic acids purposefully introduced to a site or sample to confound future analysis of target nucleic acids present in the sample that are free or substantially free from other cell components, wherein the treatment is selected from the group comprising of: enzymic treatment, chemical treatment and physical treatment; and
- ii. contacting the sample with a nucleic acid probe that preferentially binds to the contaminating nucleic acid(s) originating from the site and renders them removable from the sample.

Claim 2 (original): A method according to claim 1 wherein the contaminating nucleic acid is deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA), ribonucleic acid (RNA), locked nucleic acid (LNA) or protein nucleic acid (PNA).

Claim 3. (canceled).

Claim 4 (previously presented): A method according to claim 1 wherein the contaminating nucleic acid is an amplicon derived from a PCR or another DNA amplification process.

Claim 5 (previously presented): A method according to claim 1 wherein the contaminating nucleic acid is degradation resistant.

Claim 6 (previously presented): A method according to claim 1 wherein the contaminating nucleic acid is synthetic.

Claims 7 and 8 (canceled).

Claim 9 (currently amended): A method according to claim 1 wherein the enzymic treatments comprise contacting the sample with DNAses, RNAses, exonucleases and/or endonucleases.

Claims 10 and 11 (canceled).

Claim 12 (currently amended): A method according to claim 1 which further comprises ~~wherein the method of pretreating a nucleic acid sample is~~ PCR, mitochondrial DNA sequencing, single nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) analysis or low copy number PCR.

Claim 13 (currently amended): A method according to claim 1 wherein the pre-treatment step of ~~comprises~~ removing cell bound contaminating nucleic acids from the sample comprises contacting the sample with a nucleic acid probe that preferentially binds to the contaminating nucleic acids originating from the site and renders them removable from the sample.

Claim 14 (canceled).

Claim 15 (previously presented): A method according to claim 13 wherein the contaminating nucleic acid is of bacterial origin.

Claim 16 (previously presented): A method according to claim 15 wherein the contaminating nucleic acid is from bacteria engineered to contain at least one multicopy plasmid comprising at least one amplicon.

Claim 17 (previously presented): A method according to claim 13 wherein the cell bound contaminating nucleic acid is removed by exposing nucleic acid in the cells and then removing the nucleic acid.

Claim 18 (previously presented): A method according to claim 17 wherein nucleic acid is exposed by lysing the cells.

Claim 19 (currently amended): A method according to claim 1 wherein the pre-treatment ~~comprises~~ steps comprise removing cell bound contaminating nucleic acids from the sample by exposing nucleic acid in the cells and then removing the nucleic acid, ~~and wherein nucleic acid is removed using the pre-treatment step comprising treating the sample to preferentially remove or inactivate nucleic acids that are free or substantially free from other cell components.~~

Claim 20-42 (canceled).